Inquirer

The Reason Why Connally Won't Be On the Nixon Ticket

VERA GLASER and
MALVINA STEPHENSON

WASHINGTON

THE REAL REASON for former Treasury Secretary John Connally's abrupt and mysterious resignation was — according to a top senate source — his wife Nellie.

The terrifying memory of their last ride with President John Kennedy in Dallas still haunts her.

Deeply disturbed about her husband's safety in the atmosphere of 1972, Mrs. Connally is said to have delivered a Martha-type ultimatum, and he pulled out — almost certainly cutting himself off from a furure place on the national ticket of either party.

Connally's resignation came on May 16, just one day after the shooting of Alabama Gov. George Wallace.

"Nellie Connally worries constantly about her husband's safety," the Republican senator said. "She was very upset by the latest assassination attempt."

The handsome, silver-haired Connally looks so vigorous today many people forget he was critically wounded by the same shots which killed President Kennedy. Nellie had just uttered those ironic words, "Mr. President, Texas loves you."

For days, the then Texas governor hung between life and death. The ordeal left an indelible impression. Behind the Connallys' exuberant public manner, the nightmare remains close to the surface. It was felt by the secretary's aides at Treasury.

Nellie and John Connally

They were super-careful, despite the fact that a bodyguard accompanied Connally everywhere. In arranging a public appearance for him, an aide said, "remember, Connally was shot once. Let's not tempt fate again."

For Mrs. Connally, the Wallace shooting was the last straw. And, on his recent return from a global trip, he made his firmest statement to date to remain in private life.